

ROBERT E. LATTA  
5TH DISTRICT, OHIO

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

VICE CHAIRMAN  
CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS

COMMITTEE ON  
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ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3505**

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April 4, 2011

The Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

*WCB  
West Coast  
4/19*

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

In the fast-moving world that we live in, individuals, families, small businesses, organizations, corporations, and government entities all rely on instantaneous communication. I applaud the Commission's efforts over the years to ensure that every American is connected first by phone, and now by broadband. This infrastructure is not just critical, but necessary to our Nation's economy.

I represent the largest agricultural district in Ohio, which spans 16 counties in northern Ohio and is serviced by 18 rural telecommunications companies. Many of these rural local exchange carriers (LECs) in my district are having recurring problems with calls not being completed – incoming long distance calls to residential and business customers are not going through. The problem is not limited to LECs in my district though; it is a growing issue across the state and Midwest. However, incomplete calls can be difficult to identify, as oftentimes it is impossible to know that a call was missed. Called customers may not be aware of in-bound call problems absent notification by the calling party, and LECs may not be aware of in-bound call problems absent notification by called customers. Thus, the problem could be even more widespread.

I am writing to make you and your fellow FCC commissioners aware of this issue. Furthermore, I am asking that you investigate the problem of incoming calls being terminated in rural areas and if unjust and unreasonable discrimination is occurring, if there is a violation of common carrier requirements, or if calls are being blocked.

Businesses depend on the quality and completion of every single phone call. During this economic downturn, many small businesses operate on a small margin, and one incomplete call that results in a business transaction not being made, can be critical. Furthermore, incomplete calls adversely affect families and public safety, and can even be life-threatening. Your attention to this matter is critical to the telecommunications infrastructure in rural Ohio. I would like to meet with you, or your staff, to discuss the problem and how we can ensure that rural areas have

access to a reliable network. Please follow-up with either me or my staff member, Bethany Peck, at (202) 225-6405. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Latta", written over a horizontal line.

Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress

REL/bap



## FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

August 2, 2011

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI  
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Robert E. Latta  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1323 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Latta:

Thank you for your letter regarding concerns that calls to customers of rural local exchange carriers are not being delivered to their destination. In response to your request, Commission staff recently conducted a conference call with your staff to discuss generally what they have learned so far about this issue.

Representatives of rural carriers have met with Commission staff over the last few months to express concerns that calls are not being delivered to customers. These carriers have pointed to the Commission's Declaratory Ruling clarifying long distance carriers' (referred to as interexchange carriers) obligation to complete their customers' interexchange calls.<sup>1</sup> To determine whether an entity has violated the Commission's rules or the Communications Act, the Commission needs specific information about the circumstances regarding undelivered calls. It is not clear if these calls are being dropped intentionally, or if there is a technical issue that prevents their completion. The staff has asked the rural carriers and their industry representatives to provide any specific data available that indicates whether any parties involved in routing calls may be engaged in an activity that violates a provision of the Communications Act, a Commission rule or policy. The industry representatives and Commission staff continue working together monitoring additional data as it becomes available.

The rural carriers also approached the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS), a move that the staff supports. ATIS is a world-wide organization whose subject matter experts resolve issues related to telecommunications network interconnection and interoperability, and thus may be able to assist the rural carriers in resolving this problem. I understand that discussions with ATIS began earlier this year, and we have asked the industry to keep the Commission apprised of developments for an industry solution.

In addition, Commission staff have recommended that individual customers experiencing problems with their calls not being completed contact their long distance providers directly. If these providers are unable to solve the problem, the individual callers may be able to provide

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<sup>1</sup> *Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, Call Blocking by Carriers*, WC Docket No. 07-135, Declaratory Ruling and Order, 22 FCC Rcd 11629 (2007).

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specific information to support an allegation that their carrier is engaging in an unlawful activity. If so, a complaint would be the best way for these customers to seek relief from the Commission.

Be assured that I understand your concerns and will keep your office apprised of any developments. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski